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WE HAVE TO TALK WEATHER!

We are slowly getting over the coldest winter we have experienced on the estate (since 2006). Now, that spring is imminent as soon as it warms up a bit, wham! in comes another cold front!

We had a few snowfalls this winter, but not as many or as heavy as we would have liked. Deep inside we all have a small child wanting to thrill at the magic of being able to build a snowman in the garden or throw a snowball at an unsuspecting 'victim'. The last time that happened in the valley was October 1996 So perhaps there is still time this year.....

The good news is that August rains have been good and the burnt veld is going green plus the first spring flowers are starting to bloom.

While keeping abreast of changing legislation and compliance is the responsibility of architects, builders and owners, we have found it necessary to keep a watchful eye to ensure we have no major safety issues on the estate.

Of particular interest is the sensitive issue of swimming pools. Efforts by the estate to ensure pools are legally compliant have met with a mixed reaction with aesthetics overriding safety with some owners. What is in the pipeline now, and apparently nearing completion, is revised pool legislation for private pools, which was recently published in draft form in Business Insider SA on 24 July, 2018. If gazetted in its existing form, and applied to new and existing pools, there will

need to be considerable safety changes to all home pools. If you are interested in seeing the changes here is the link: <https://www.businessinsider.co.za/private-swimming-pool-standard-sans-10134-mandatory-safety-net-to-prevent-drowning-2018-7>

What is also interesting is that this year South Africa adopted a new compulsory plug and socket system – the SANS 164-2. This is what it looks like:

More information is available at <https://www.businessinsider.co.za/south-africas-old-three-pronged-plug-is-a-killer-2018-8>



On a lighter note, if you haven't been to your berg home recently, come now and enjoy the wonderful transition from winter to spring!

Denise

The Process and Requirements For Selling Your Property on Cathkin Estate

We really don't want to see any of our home owners selling their properties on Cathkin Estate, but we also realise and understand that circumstances change and therefore properties need to be sold.

To start with the broader picture, the local municipality has tightened up on their processes and efficiency, so to prevent any unnecessary delays in your sale I thought it prudent to list the processes that may not be understood or clear to everyone. Please note that these points are by no means the only requirements you need and I would strongly recommend you speak to your Estate Agent to fully understand all the requirements.



- You need to have the title deed for the property.
- Make sure you have accurate plans that have been stamped and approved by Okhahlamba Municipality. They will reject any plans that are not approved by them and may even fine you for building without an approved plan. If you have any queries in this regard, please speak to your architect.
- Make sure that the house that was built is the same as the approved plans. The Municipality may reject your application if there are any deviations that have not been approved by them. Again, if you have any queries speak to your architect.
- Proof of purchase of any additional bulk that was required for your build and that was purchased by you, whether from the developers or any other owner, must be submitted
- Make sure that the new owner is aware that he /she will need to pay an amount equal to one year's levy to the Cathkin Estate Home Owners Association – Capital Development Fund. The levy clearance certificate will only be issued once this money has been paid.
- The new owner will be required to fully understand and accept the Cathkin Estates Memorandum of Incorporation, Conduct Rules and the Architectural Guidelines. These are large documents so a one page confirmation and declaration of acceptance will need to be signed before the levy clearance is given. All these documents are available from GEMS, our managing agents.
- In terms of the Memorandum of Incorporation all new owners are required to sign a debit order for the monthly levies and electricity charge.
- Managing bulk that owners have purchased is a challenge as bulk may be purchased from the developers and home owners who may have excess available for sale. If these transactions are not relayed to our Finance department the monthly levy is not charged correctly. In future any bulk purchased will be recorded in a sequentially numbered bulk register which will only be updated on receipt of a Cathkin Estates bulk purchase document. This document will be available from GEMS
- Please note that all other requirements between the Seller and Purchaser with regard to buying and selling property are to be covered by the sale agreement and are not the responsibility of Cathkin Estates.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tinus Bam



Building on the two new houses in Village 3 is well underway as the first signs of spring slowly start to show on the estate.

The roof of House Sithole, on site 107, is in place and it is just a matter of time before we can welcome yet another new homeowner and his family onto the estate.



Work on the foundations of House Kaikoura, on 101, has started. and they are hoping that the concrete base for the building will be cast before the summer rains start. This will be the first house on the estate with a timber construction and will add a fresh new dimension to the existing variety of designs and builds. Alterations for House Petmar Familytrust on 135/136 show good progress.

Several plans have been approved by the committee and are in different stages of municipal approval. Amongst them are the plans for the upgrade of the estate workshop. The

current structure which is situated on the eastern part of the estate near the builders yard and bottom gate will be upgraded to include staff toilets and storage facilities for the tools and equipment of the estate. Plans have also been submitted for the construction of a double carport at the office building for the estate's vehicles.

While the dry winter months with their higher fire risk are almost past, it is still a good idea for you to test the working of your fire hose. There is a tendency for emergency equipment to be neglected until suddenly it is needed, and in a hurry. Make sure yours is in excellent working condition with no blockages. See overleaf for more about fire hoses.

We had the privilege of watching a red hartebeest ewe giving birth to her young in the open field in front of our house yesterday evening. Not long after the birth the young hartebeest quietly walked away with his mother and two other ewes with their newborn offspring. With the buck giving birth to their young, spring is in the air. The good rain we had during August is in sharp contrast to the dry spring we had last season and will surely be of great benefit to all the gardens on the estate. Now is the time to fertilize your lawn, prepare the soil for planting new trees, shrubs and other plants and prune the existing plants in your garden. Now is also the time to start enjoying a great new gardening season.

Happy gardening to all the gardeners. Let's all do our bit to make Cathkin Estates the most desirable estate in the Berg to live in!

A VERY SPECIAL GIFT

OVER THE YEARS MIKE AND GLYNIS GOODMAN HAVE SUPPORTED OUR TREE PLANTING EXERCISE BY REGULARLY DONATING INDIGENOUS TREES FOR PLANTING BOTH ON THE ESTATE AND ALONG THE MAIN ACCESS ROAD OUTSIDE OUR FENCE. THIS PAST WEEKEND THEY BROUGHT DOWN AN ADDITIONAL 6 TREES FOR US AND WE FELT THAT IF OTHER OWNERS WERE MADE AWARE OF WHAT AN AMAZING CONTRIBUTION THIS IS TO OUR ENVIRONMENT, PERHAPS OTHERS WOULD BE INCLINED TO DO THE SAME.

THANK YOU MIKE AND GLYNIS FROM ALL AT CATHKIN ESTATES!

GARDENING NEWS

Jill Forrester

Well, as we all know in our Berg, things can change rather rapidly up here, especially the weather. In the last newsletter I was lamenting the dry spell we were enduring for our indigenous gardens.

For those homeowners who have not visited Cathkin Estate of late, August has been a gardeners delight as far as soft, plentiful moisture goes - even a bit of snow on the upper reaches of our Berg.



With this, comes our gorgeous arrays of green shoots and minute leaves on a fair amount of our trees and shrubs. The burnt expanses of savannah are suddenly being enjoyed by all our animals and we no longer have to contend with black soot and dust which was being blown around in some rather viscous wind at times. The blackness turns to green and Spring is on its waywe hope !!!



I have little to report as far as planting goes except to say, a lot of weeding and trimming has been done and a super new flight of rock stairs built at the main dam to assist in getting to the path. I think Mhkize has done a great job. We continue to have a fair amount of our plants eaten and the trellises damaged but this is totally out of our control.



All we, as homeowners can do, is to continue to plant new trees and shrubs to beautify our Estate. I really enjoy walking past a home with a well cared for garden. Thank you to those of you who do put in the effort.

Unfortunately, we have recently had two incidents of plants being pilfered from gardens on our Estate. This is very sad indeed as plants are not cheap to purchase, but also it is not very neighbourly behaviour to take without asking. Hopefully the culprits will have to live with their guilt and by making everyone aware of the problem we can identify them.

ABOUT FIRE HOSE REELS

Following on from the AGM request by members for fire hoses & extinguishers to be serviced, this was done this week for those homeowners who requested this service.

The need for fire hoses sparked some debate since it is an estate rule, but not a requirement of most insurance companies, and questions were raised about the pressure that would be available to **fight** a fire and the efficacy of any such attempt.

This was a rule from day one, and when faced with an approaching fire EVERYONE needs to help in some way. Any deterrent against the possibility of a run-away veld fire approaching unoccupied houses is a help. Knowing every house has a connected hose, whoever is available would know where the hose is kept and could at the very least soak the perimeter of the property to prevent a garden from being totally destroyed and even keep the flames away from the buildings.

The actual fire fighting would be done by the experts,

FEATHERED FRIENDS ON THE ESTATE

Dario Raciti

Southern Bald Ibis

The Bald Ibis in our area has had the “Southern” added to its name. This is to differentiate it from its relative in North Africa which unfortunately with their numbers dwindling, is now restricted to a few colonies in Morocco. The same differentiation applies to the Ground Hornbill—see our March 2018 newsletter.

The Southern Bald Ibis is endemic to Southern Africa and exists in a pretty confined area with the greatest concentration in the north-eastern Free State, followed by south-eastern Mpumalanga and western KZN. Formerly widespread in the Transkei they are now virtually non-existent due to hunting and overgrazing. Because their present range is much smaller than their historical range, they are now Red Data listed, ranked Vulnerable.

We are indeed fortunate to have them as regular visitors on Cathkin Estates, as we are in their preferred habitat of high-rainfall, sour and alpine grasslands and close to cliffs that are used as their nesting sites.

It is an unmistakable species, with iridescent all-black plumage, tinted with purple and blue, and in the sunlight the rich bronze sheen on the shoulders comes to the fore. Due to the neck feathers stopping or starting, depending on how one views this, at an angle just below the throat, it appears to have an odd-looking Victorian-like ruff, creating an illusion that its head appears smaller than it is. Adult birds have wrinkled white faces and throats, and a waxy red coloured cap like a construction worker's hard hat.

As it spends much time walking in search of food it has shorter legs than other Ibises. Known to fly into a burnt area within hours of a fire it works the area systematically. These birds feed mainly on insects, earthworms, snails and frogs. On the Estate we often have half a dozen or more of them on



burnt veld moving about their business quietly, unlike their noisy cousin, the Hadedda, who certainly let us know when they're around. Of late I've seen them more and more often on the rugby fields of Estcourt High School, but I can't recall ever seeing them there during my school days. I can only speculate on the reason for their presence there, and hope that it's not caused by the shrinking of their preferred habitat due to increased agricultural activities.

Their nesting sites are sometimes raided by the larger birds of prey like the Verreaux's Eagle, who not only take the chicks, but adult birds as well. Other raptors like the Gymnogene (African Harrier Hawk), Jackal Buzzard and Cape Eagle Owl nesting close to them sometimes forces them to relocate to other nesting sites.

Do look out and enjoy them as they move military style on our burnt veld in search of food as at this time of the year. They more than likely have hungry little ones to feed!

RUNNING THE TRAILS ON THE ESTATE



Tim Smythe

Trail running is defined as a sport or activity consisting of running and hiking over trails and it is increasing in popularity. The reason for its steady growth I believe, lies in the fact that escaping into the woods, meadows and mountains gives you a nature experience that a road run often cannot, and a trail's softer surface gives your body a break, too. This move to nature spans the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual areas of your life, making you highly aware of your surroundings. This feeling can be addictive in the positive sense of the word and I believe the addiction lies in the feeling of being close to nature. The trails on Cathkin Estates are second to none in the valley in terms of natural beauty and are the perfect distance for beginners.

Some routes on the estate offer differing levels of difficulty, terrain and scenery as well as smaller trails that I will briefly mention.

1) The bike track around the plantations has a starting point off the main road, between the office and Tumbleweed lane in Village 2. This is an easy run of approximately 5km taking you around three gum plantations with views of the vleis, river, and hills on the Sappi boundary with the Estate.

2) This run starts at the same point and is named Spurfowl loop and is a 7km circuit. When approaching the Ndanyane pinnacle take a right where the trail forks and this will take you along the base of the hill moving above villages 2 to 5 and coming out at the water plant. From there take the tar road back through the villages along Cathkin Drive and back to the starting point. This is a perfect week day run/hike and a relatively flat trail with views of the homes and northern boundary of the estate as well as Cathkin peak and Champagne Castle.

3) Probably the most breathtaking trail in the valley it is approximately 12km in distance with a perfect ratio of climbs, open flat sections, and drop-offs. Start at the same point mentioned above but when approaching the pinnacle take the left fork which takes you on top of the Ndanyane. The path splits at the top so take a left following the Sunset Trail sign. This takes you along the crest of the hill with lovely picnic stops along the cliffs with views of the valleys and natural bush pockets to the South. One gets a truly desolate and remote feeling along this stretch as the only sound is the murmur of streams below and melodic calls of grassveld birds such as the beautiful *bokmakierie* and Cape longclaw. When the trail turns west and climbs over the first hill one gets a very unique panoramic view of the berg with a particularly distorted view of the Dragon's Back and perfect unobstructed view of the hole in Gatberg (Intunja).





Be aware of the eland herds and smaller antelope that graze the plains to the north as the trail dips in to Poachers Forest which brings welcome relief in terms of cool shade and fresh mountain streams to quench your thirst. The trail then exits the natural bush pocket going past Mazibuko's corner turning down towards Ntabeni Dam.

From there one has the option of viewing a waterfall from an overhang to the north of the dam or go on straight along the trail towards Village 5. There is a difficult drop-off to manoeuvre and then into a section of forest before coming out at the water plant. Take Spur Fowl loop back along the base of the hill finishing at the starting point.

There are many smaller tracks within the villages as well as Thulezi Falls to the west of the plantation for those seeking something shorter and sweeter.

It is also worth noting that within an eco-estate one must take proper caution of one's surroundings.

- It is important to slow down when approaching a blind rise so as to not startle the wildlife
- be sure to keep your eyes on the trail periodically to make sure there are no natural obstacles or snakes on the path.
- It is vital to use only the trails for hiking and running and avoid going off-track.
- Being in nature you must use your ears as well as your eyes.
- Don't let the trails intimidate you. After all, it's just dirt!

"Trails provide an undeniable escape from what can be an otherwise hectic day. Eliminate the outside environment of cars and other city noises and import sounds of birds and trees rustling in the wind, and you've got an entirely different experience. You feel like you're connected to something bigger, and that's Mother Earth. When a woman [or man] looks at the trees, the birds, the sun, it's very grounding." (Lisa Jhung, Runners World 2013)